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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/698,082	10/30/2003	Armin Willmeroth	MUH-12838	9900
24131	7590	06/21/2005	EXAMINER	
LERNER AND GREENBERG, PA P O BOX 2480 HOLLYWOOD, FL 33022-2480				LANDAU, MATTHEW C
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2815	

DATE MAILED: 06/21/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

E/

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/698,082	WILLMEROOTH ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Matthew Landau	2815

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 April 2005.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-12 and 14-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 5-12 and 20 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-4 and 14-19 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Claims 5, 6, 7-12 and 20 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in the reply filed on November 1, 2004.

Claim Objections

Claim 16 is objected to because of the following informalities: the limitation “a first region including said substrate and a first region including...” is objected to. It is suggested the limitation be changed to read “a first region including said substrate and a second first region including...”. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 2, and 14-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kusunoki (US Pat. 6,323,509).

Regarding claims 1 and 19, Figure 1 of Kusunoki discloses an IGBT with a monolithically integrated antiparallel diode, comprising: a semiconductor substrate 1 forming an inner zone and having a front side, a rear side, and a peripheral high-voltage edge (region where

p-regions 28 are located); said front side of said semiconductor substrate having semiconductor wells 8 of a first conductivity type (p-type) formed therein with transistor cells within said peripheral high-voltage edge; at least one emitter region 4 of the first conductivity type formed at said rear side of said semiconductor substrate; at least one emitter short region 6 of a second conductivity type (n-type) integrated substantially only in a region of said high voltage edge, said at least one emitter short region lying in a plane with said at least one emitter region and forming an electrode of the antiparallel diode; said at least one emitter region having no emitter short regions within said high-voltage edge; and said semiconductor wells on said front side of said semiconductor substrate forming a counterelectrode of the antiparallel diode. Note that it is considered that the gate electrodes 11 dissect region 8 into a plurality of separate wells. Also note that the limitation "doping with a dose of between 1×10^{12} and 1×10^{15} charge carriers per cm^2 " is merely a product-by-process limitation. The specified dose (which is a process step) does not necessarily impart a specific dopant concentration. Therefore, the product-by-process limitation does not structurally/patentably the claimed product over the prior art. The difference between Kusunoki and the claimed invention is the emitter region having a thickness less than 1 micrometer. However, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Kusunoki by using the claimed thickness value, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233.

Regarding claim 2, Figure 1 of Kusunoki discloses said semiconductor wells 8 at least predominately contain transistor cells.

Regarding claim 14, Kusunoki discloses a lifetime of minority charge carriers in said semiconductor substrate 1 is at least 10 microseconds (col. 19, lines 49-51 and col. 20, lines 5 and 6).

Regarding claim 15, a further difference between Kusunoki and the claimed invention is a thickness of said inner zone formed by said substrate is less than 200 μm . However, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Kusunoki by using the claimed thickness, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233.

Regarding claim 16, Figure 1 of Kusunoki discloses a field stop region (buffer region) 3 of the second conductivity type (n-type) integrated between a first region including said substrate 1 and a second region including said emitter region 4 and emitter short region 6.

Regarding claim 17, Kusunoki discloses the impurity concentration of the substrate is 1×10^{13} - $1 \times 10^{15} / \text{cm}^3$ (col. 16, lines 12-15) and the impurity concentration of the emitter region is 1×10^{17} - $1 \times 10^{21} / \text{cm}^3$. Therefore, the emitter region is doped significantly higher than the emitter.

Regarding claim 18, the product-by-process limitation “wherein said at least one emitter region is annealed at a temperature of less than 600°C” does not structurally/patentably distinguish the claimed invention over the prior art.

Claims 1-4 and 15-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakagawa et al. (US Pat. 4,689,647, hereinafter Nakagawa).

Regarding claims 1 and 19, Figure 6 of Nakagawa discloses an IGBT with a monolithically integrated antiparallel diode, comprising: a semiconductor substrate 12 forming an inner zone and having a front side, a rear side, and a peripheral high-voltage edge (region to the right of region 14-4); said front side of said semiconductor substrate having semiconductor wells (13-1 and 13-2) of a first conductivity type (p-type) formed therein with transistor cells within said peripheral high-voltage edge; at least one emitter region 11 of the first conductivity type formed at said rear side of said semiconductor substrate; at least one emitter short region 21 of a second conductivity type (n-type) integrated substantially only in a region of said high voltage edge, said at least one emitter short region lying in a plane with said at least one emitter region and forming an electrode of the antiparallel diode; said at least one emitter region having no emitter short regions within said high-voltage edge; and said semiconductor wells on said front side of said semiconductor substrate forming a counterelectrode of the antiparallel diode.

Note that the limitation “doping with a dose of between 1×10^{12} and 1×10^{15} charge carriers per cm^2 ” is merely a product-by-process limitation. The specified dose (which is a process step) does not necessarily impart a specific dopant concentration. Therefore, the product-by-process limitation does not structurally/patently limit the claimed product over the prior art. The difference between Nakagawa and the claimed invention is the emitter region having a thickness less than 1 micrometer. However, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Nakagawa by using the claimed thickness value, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art.

In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233.

Regarding claim 2, Figure 6 of Nakagawa discloses said semiconductor wells (13-1 and 13-2) at least predominately contain transistor cells.

Regarding claim 3, Figure 6 of Nakagawa discloses said at least one emitter short region 21 reaches as far as a chip end in edge portions of the IGBT.

Regarding claim 4, Figure 6 of Nakagawa discloses edge regions of the IGBT contain an emitter region 11 at said high-voltage edge.

Regarding claim 15, Figure 6 of Nakagawa discloses a thickness of said inner zone formed by said substrate 12 is less than 200 μ m (col. 3, lines 43-45).

Regarding claim 16, Figure 6 of Nakagawa discloses a field stop region 10 of the second conductivity type (n-type) integrated between a first region including said substrate 12 and a second region including said emitter region 11 and emitter short region 21.

Regarding claim 17, Nakagawa discloses the emitter region 11 is doped significantly higher than substrate 12 (col. 3, lines 41-44).

Regarding claim 18, the product-by-process limitation "wherein said at least one emitter region is annealed at a temperature of less than 600°C" does not structurally/patently distinguish the claimed invention over the prior art.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed April 13, 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to Applicant's arguments regarding Kusunoki, as stated in the above rejection, it would have been obvious to have an emitter region with a thickness less than 1

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micron. Also, the limitation “doping with a dose of between 1×10^{12} and 1×10^{15} charge carriers per cm²” is merely a process limitation that in no way structurally distinguishes the claimed product over Kusunoki. “The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process.” In re Thorpe, 227 USPQ 964,966.

Applicant further argues that Nakagawa specifically teaches away from the claim limitation “wherein the emitter region has a thickness of less than 1 micrometer thick” because Nakagawa discloses a thickness of 5-8 micrometers. Simply disclosing a thickness other than the claimed thickness does not mean Nakagawa teaches away from the claimed thickness. At no point does Nakagawa disclose that using thickness for region 11 less than the disclosed value of 5-8 µm would make the device inoperable. Nakagawa does not even specifically disclose that making such a modification would be disadvantageous.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period

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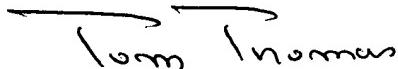
will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Matthew C. Landau whose telephone number is (571) 272-1731.

The examiner can normally be reached from 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tom Thomas can be reached on (571) 272-1664. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9306 for regular communications and (703) 872-9306 for After Final communications.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should any questions arise regarding access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Matthew C. Landau

A handwritten signature consisting of two stylized, overlapping loops above the name "Tom Thomas".

Examiner

TOM THOMAS
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

June 16, 2005